independent claim 1 distinguishes patentably from the prior art and is allowable, then each of its trailing dependent claims must so distinguish and be allowable. *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1371, 1376, 5 USPQ2d 1596, 1600 (Fed. Cir. 1988). Consequently, the following remarks will focus on the reasons why the cited references do not teach or suggest the combination of features set forth in claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is not taught or suggested by any of the references relied on by the Examiner, even if combined.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 4-5, 7, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Buck* in view of *Prevost*. The Examiner admits that "*Buck* is silent as to the spacing between the fibers." However, to fill this gap, the Examiner relies on *Prevost*, stating that:

> *Prevost* teaches a synthetic turf line system for a playing field wherein parallels rows of ribbons with granular infill are used to simulate real grass (claim 1 reference). There is only one dimension given for the rows distance (claim 14 reference) of 5/16 to 2 and1/4 inches and the figure 1 shows a spacing along a girded (woven) backing of equally spaced fiber rows (in both directions). The above-described parallel rows would make it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use equal spacing between the columns and rows since it is known to be advantageous to use wider parallel spacing of rows in order to make easier installation of granular material (13) (column 5 line 30-45).

Prevost discloses an artificial turf line system for a natural grass playing field. *Prevost* indicates that an "object of a first embodiment of the present invention is to provide a permanent marking system for natural grass turf surfaces in order to reduce the cost and labor involved in maintenance of the lines." (Column 1, line 66 Column 2, line 2) (emphasis added). *Prevost* goes on to indicate that an "object of the second embodiment is to eliminate the need to trim natural grass strips disposed between adjacent patio stones." (Column 2, lines 15-17) (emphasis added).

The only disclosure in *Prevost* of spacing with respect to the rows and columns is to provide the conventional spacing ranges for tufting ribbons. In particular, *Prevost* generally discloses with respect to the rows that "the preferred spacing between adjacent rows of ribbons (10) and (11) is in the range between 5/16 and 2-1/4 inches." (Column 5, lines 32-34). With respect to the spacing between columns, *Prevost* generally discloses that "between two and eight tufts are formed per inch of row with four tufts per inch being preferred." (Column 6, lines 51-62). If two tufts are provided per inch, the spacing between the tufts is 1/2 inch and if eight tufts are formed per inch the spacing is 1/8 inch. Thus, while *Prevost* generally discloses the conventional tufting range for spacing between rows of 5/16 to 2 1/4, and generally discloses the conventional tufting range for spacing between columns of 1/8 to 1/2, there is no teaching or suggestion that the spacing between the rows and columns be the same. Nor is there any teaching or suggestion of any benefit to having the spacing between the rows and columns be the same.

To establish "obviousness": (1) the prior art itself must suggest or motivate the modification of a reference, (2) there must be a reasonable expectation of success, and (3) the prior art must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. MPEP §2143. In this case, neither *Buck* nor *Prevost* teach or suggest, even when combined, all of the limitations of claim 1. There is no teaching in any of the references of having the spacing between the rows and columns being substantially the same. If an individual element of a claimed combination is not present in any of the references, then the claimed invention would not have been "obvious" from the reference. MPEP 2143.03; *In re Serneker*, 702 F.2d 989, 994-95, 217 USPQ 1, 5-7 (Fed. Cir. 1983).

The Examiner indicates that the described rows "would make it obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to use equal spacing between the columns and rows since it is known to be advantageous to use wider parallel spacing of rows in order to make easier installation of granular material." However, using this rational, for the easiest installation of granular material *Prevost* discloses 2 1/4 inches as the widest spacing between the rows. However, 1/2 inch is the widest disclosure provided with respect to the spacing between the columns, a difference of over an inch from the spacing between the rows. Thus, *Prevost* does not teach a turf system in which the spacing between the rows and the spacing between the columns are substantially the same.

As Applicant's specification explains, "[h]aving rows 49 and columns 48 equally spaced apart allows for a more consistent playing surface laterally and longitudinally." (Specification, page 4, lines 22-23). There is simply no teaching, suggestion or motivation found in *Buck*, even in combination with *Prevost*, for this novel relationship.

Accordingly, Applicants attorney respectfully submits that the claim 1 combination as it presently stands would not have been obvious to a person skilled in this art at the time the invention was made, and requests reconsideration of the rejection of claim 1, and its trailing dependent claims.

This Reply is believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action of June 13, 2006, is believed to squarely address each and every ground for objection or rejection raised by the Examiner, and is further believed to materially advance the prosecution of this application toward immediate allowance.

Formal allowance of claims 1-2, 4-5 and 7-12 is, therefore, courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: December 5, 2006

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, this 5th day of December, 2006.

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